

lit. hist. v. 13.  
A

COMPARISON  
BETWEEN THE  
HORACE of CORNEILLE  
AND THE  
ROMAN FATHER  
OF  
Mr. WHITEHEAD,



L O N D O N :

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COMPARISON

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## COMPARISON, &c.

**M**R. Bromley and Mr. Freeman, two Gentlemen of allow'd Taste, and distinguished Judgment, came to *London* on the twenty-fourth of *February* ; and hearing that the new Play of the *Roman Father* was to be represented that Evening, they got into the Pit by a Quarter after Four. They could get no Places in the Boxes ; otherwise they would not have chose to have been in the midst of that Noise and Confusion: Indeed they had three or four Times a Desire to have left the Pit, fearing that instead of hearing a Play, they should hear nothing but an Uproar.

A young Gentleman happened to sit next them, who had been bred at the University of *Oxford*, where he had really made Study, and not Vice, or what is vulgarly called Pleasure, his Pursuit ; and where, when he had an Inclination to relax his Mind from more abstruse

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Studies,

Studies, it was his Custom, instead of being idle, to read the best Dramatic Authors; and indeed, all Authors who have written what we call *Les Belles Lettres*. This young Gentleman seemed very uneasy at the great Tumult in the House. At Five o'Clock the Musicians began to play, and were accompanied by that Variety of Noises which only denote that the *Town* would have them play something different from what they were then playing, although they made too great a Clamour to suffer them to hear their Commands. Is it possible, said the young Gentleman (quite from his Heart, and loud enough to be heard by those who sat next him) for any Thing that wears a human Face, to delight thus in pelting and persecuting their fellow Creatures? Or is it only with a Design to shew the Power that Noise and Discord have to entertain a human Mind? But when the Cat-calls began to throw forth their harmonious Sounds, and from different Parts of the House to re-echo to each other, as if those who were Masters of that Branch of *Musick*, thought Concord and Discord the same thing; our young Gentleman, not ashamed of being ignorant of this polite Custom, could not forbear asking Mr. *Bromley*, what were those Instruments, and what the Design of that horrible Noise? Mr. *Bromley* answered, that the Instruments were called Cat-calls, and the Design of those who brought them there, was

no

no other than (whenever they really did dislike, or had an Inclination to dislike any thing in the Play) to drown the Players Voices, and prevent the rest of the Audience from hearing, and consequently from judging, whether they liked it or no. Is it then, replied the young Gentleman, in the Power of any set of Men to come here, and either maliciously or wantonly, condemn unheard the Labours of an ingenious Man, who perhaps too may depend on the Success of his Play, for much more essential Blessings than the capricious Breath of Man can bestow ? It is, said Mr. Bromley, and I have often lamented it ; and wish some Remedy could be found to disappoint so cruel an Effect of either Levity or Malice. 'Tis a barbarous Custom, reply'd the young Gentleman, and, as *Hamlet* says, *More honoured in the Breach than the Observation.*

Our two Friends were much pleased with their Neighbour, and Mr. Freeman said, " Indeed Sir, I think you are in the Right, " and it appears to me a kind of Infatuation, fond as the *English* are of *French* " Customs and Fashions, and in my Opinion, in Instances where our own are " much more laudable, that in this one Instance only, in which the Decency, nay, I " may add the Humanity of the *French* Custom really so much excels ours, we should " not follow them."

When the Prologue was spoken, Mr. *Bromley* and Mr. *Freeman* agreed, that if the Author had performed what he so fairly promised, lopt every luxuriant Branch, and copy'd Nature with Simplicity, they wished no more.

The Play was heard indeed with Candour; and, I think I may say, the natural Consequence of that Candour was the Applause it met with.

Our two Friends spent the Evening together after the Play; when the Conversation turned chiefly on the Images raised in their Minds by the Representation of the *Roman Father* on the Stage: and here I will let their own Words express their Ideas, as a Recital of a Conversation cannot well raise such strong Images in our Minds as the Words of the Persons speaking.

Mr. *Bromley*. I confess, my Mind is filled with this Play, my Attention was not once lost, and I think the Author has kept up to his Promise in the Prologue; and his own Writing does not seem to have been so much the Object of his Thoughts, as by the Voice of Nature, to convey such Sensations to our Minds as his Characters and their Situations are properly adapted to make us feel. Indeed, I am pleased more than I can express, Old *Horatius*, whilst he was on the Stage, made me almost a *Roman*, and I could sympathize with him in his Raptures, and in his  
Griefs,



Griefs, even whilst the Love of Glory was his only Motive ; but when he is divided between his Love of Glory and his paternal Affection, my whole Heart was rent, I felt myself a Father, and for the Moment I knew no other Sensations, but what his Agonies inspired.

Mr. *Freeman*. You speak my Thoughts ; my Heart felt like yours, and what is still to me a stronger Proof of the Goodness of this Play, is, that the Images it has raised in my Mind, remain yet as strongly impressed, as when I was at the Representation.

Mr. *Bromley*. What think you now of your favourite *Corneille* ? I remember before you saw the *Roman Father*, you had no Conception that any other Author could improve a Story already so well managed, or alter a Scheme already so well executed by that celebrated *French Genius*.

Mr. *Freeman*. I confess, for the present, I think I prefer the *Roman Father* ; for I do not remember that *Corneille*, though I admired him, raised the same Sensations in me as I have felt this Night. But may not this be owing to the Action ? I have only read *Corneille's Horace* ; I have seen the *Roman Father* represented I may properly say to the Life ; just now I have seen it, 'tis some time since I read the *French Horace*, and the Ideas I had when I read it being grown faint and languid,



guid, perhaps this may be the Cause of the Preference I now give the *English* Play.

Mr. *Bromley*. I see you will very unwillingly give up *Corneille* in Favour of a new Author: However, I own the Force of what you say; and altho' the *Roman Father* has at present so greatly the Advantage in my Mind over the *French Horace*, that they do not appear to admit of a Comparison, yet will I not give myself Leave to fix my Opinion, till I have read the *English* Play, lest as you say, I should be deluded by the Force of Action, and that Delusion should take from my Judgment the Power of exerting itself. But this Play has strangely affected my Mind, and left Impressions that seem as if they would be lasting.

The two Gentlemen separated that Evening charm'd with the *Roman Father*, and the next Day Mr. *Freeman* sent his Friend the following Letter.

S I R,

Feb. 25th.

**T**H O' I own myself very much pleased with the *Roman Father* of Mr. *Whitehead*, and was, as you may remember last Night, very greatly affected with it; yet on coming home, I cast my Eyes on the *Horace* of *Corneille*, and was so engaged by the very first Scene, that I could not go to sleep 'till  
I had

I had gone quite thro' the Play. The Pleasure which I had before taken in this excellent Performance, of the most excellent of the *French Dramatic Writers*, return'd, and I condemn'd myself of Injustice to his Memory, in having suffered myself to be so enchanted by the Power of fine Action, as to half agree to a Preference; which, on farther Consideration, I cannot give to this modern Performance, though I must still allow it a most engaging Simplicity, and many striking Beauties.

Accuse me not of Caprice, that I should endeavour to repair the Injury I think I have done *Corneille*, in acquiescing to the Preference given to the *English Play*; I speak now as I did last Night, the first Sallies of my Mind; and this is not the only Time that the Freedom you have so generously given me of opposing my Judgment (weak as it is) to yours, has cost you the Trouble of setting me right: But to confess the Truth, I believe the Candour you have so frequently shewn, in owning yourself convinced by what I have sometimes happen'd to say, when we have differ'd in Opinion in Literary Matters, has encouraged me to this Undertaking.

*Horace* in his *Art of Poetry* says concerning Dramatic Writers,

*Aut Famam sequere, aut sibi Convenientia finge  
Scriptor —*

Now

Now when a Poet makes the former his Choice, tho' he has undoubtedly the Liberty of adding any Characters that he shall think proper, not inconsistent with the Story, either for the adorning his Piece, or forming it into a Dramatic Performance; and also any Actions or Incidents not inconsistent with the Characters, or contradictory to the known Facts, yet he has certainly no Right to change the real Characters, or alter the Story.

Young *Heratius* is described in *Livy*, bold, valiant, and fired with the Love of Glory, and the Honour of his Country; nor are there any Traces in the Historian either before or after the Act of killing his Sister, of that Tenderness of Nature which the *English* Author has bestow'd on his favourite young Hero. Such Tenderness, tho' it might make the Character amiable, makes it inconsistent; for nothing but that rough Virtue which *Livy* has trac'd out, and *Corneille* has justly copied, could have induced such a brutal Act. The *French* Poet indeed has given him a Wife, but it was in order to heighten his Character in this Point, and shew that he was not only deaf to Nature in the Intreaties of a Sister, but that he could almost unfeelingly resist the stronger Claim to Affection, the Supplication of a loving and beloved Wife.

I cannot help thinking with *Corneille*, that this Steadiness, or rather savageness of Temper in young *Horace*, was absolutely necessary towards

wards making him capable of such a cruel Outrage on his Sister : But that such a Temper was not necessary towards forming the Hero that should encounter his nearest Friends for the Service of his Country, is shewn in the Character of *Corneille's Curiace*, and the Contrast between these two young Warriors in the third Scene of the second Act, is to me one of the greatest Beauties in *Corneille*.

The Love of Glory, or rather the Desire of serving his Country, was strong enough in the Breast of *Curiace*, to make him undertake and lose his Life in the Execution of the arduous Task allotted him ; and tho' he is lifted up by this high Honour, confer'd on him by his Country, to a Rank of Heroism, esteem'd in those Ages little short of Divinity, yet he rejoices to own he is A MAN ; and in short, all that can be said for the amiable Part of the Character of *Publius Horatius* in the *English* Play, is to be found in the *Curiace* of *Corneille* ; and to me there appears more Beauty in the two Characters as separate, than as they are blended in Mr. *Whitehead's Publius*.

The Spirit old *Horatius* shews in that noble Speech in *Livy*, Chap. XXVI. will justify the heighthening his Character in the beautiful Manner our *English* Poet has done it, nor will I appear so partial to the *French* Author as to attempt making any Comparison between them in this Point ; but I could

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wish that *Corneille* had thought it necessary to have more strongly heighten'd this Character of old *Horatius*, as he has shewn such excellent Sketches in his third and fourth Act, but our *French* Author was painting the *Roman* Champion of his Country, and not the *Roman Father*.

The *Camille* of *Corneille* (the same with the *Horatia* in the *English* Play) is not indeed distinguish'd in the Manner she is in the *Roman Father*, for there is another Woman who being in the same distressful Circumstances, shares half, or more than half our Attention for the three first Acts, and who is so much what may be call'd the Heroine of the Play; that *Camille* for a long Time appears the second Character; yet even there the various Turns of her Mind are beautifully represented. She is possess'd of a large Share of Female Softness, and strong Affections; she is (like most of her Sex) soon elated with any Prospect of obtaining her Wishes, but as soon depress'd by the least Obstacle arising that may cause a Disappointment. What can be more finely imagined to work upon such a Mind as *Camille's*, than the Oracle which she relates in the second Scene of the first Act, and the Dream which follows it? And her Soliloquy in the fourth Act shews how the various Turns of Fortune on that Day had tended towards hurrying her Mind backwards and forwards, from Hope, inspired by the Oracle,

to



to Fear confirm'd by her Dream. In such a Character as *Camille's*, 'twas truly natural for her to run out to meet her Brother, and to upbraid him with the Murther of her Lover, regardless of the Consequences that might attend it, and forgetful of the Injunctions her Brother had before given her; and as natural for her to fly from the Death she had rashly, not designedly, provoked, as soon as she saw his pointed Sword. The Softness of *Camille's* Temper could not suffer her to do so resolute an Act as purposely to provoke her own Death.

The Meeting between *Camille* and her betroth'd Lover *Curiace*, affords an agreeable and tender Scene in the first Act, and is a most pleasing Confirmation to her of the Truth of the Oracle; and the Leave *Curiace* obtains of her Father, that their Nuptials may be the next Day solemnized, adds greatly to her Distress. I declare myself excessively charm'd with the Conduct of *Corneille* in his *Camille's* Character, and tho' the Use of Oracles, Prophecies, Dreams, Ghosts, Witches, and all supernatural Powers are generally decry'd, yet to me there appears a great Beauty in those Sort of Oracles (perfectly agreeable also to the *Roman* Customs) which lead credulous deluded Wretches on to their own undoing, whilst as *Shakespear* says, " They keep the Word of Promise to our Ear, but break it to our Hope."

*Sabine* (in *Corneille*) Sister to the *Curiatii* and Wife to young *Horatius*, is a Person intirely of the Poet's forming. I know there is no Foundation in History for such a Woman ; nor is there on the other hand any Contradiction to such a Person ; and in that Case I think the Poet is at Liberty to add what Characters he pleases ; nor can any Objection lye against adding *Sabine*, that will not equally hold good against *Valeria* in the *Roman Father*, or many other Characters in all those Plays which have been founded upon Historical Facts.

*Sabine* appears to have more Constancy of Mind than *Camille*, is not so soon elated or depress'd with Hopes and Fears, and yet from her distressful Situation is thoroughly sensible of the Misery that must befall both herself and her Friend, let the Event of the Combat be what it will. By introducing *Sabine*, the *French* Author has an Opportunity of shewing again, as between young *Horace* and *Curiace*, a strong Contrast of Character ; and by doubling the Parties distress'd he has of course doubled the Distress itself, and raised a double Share of Pity in our Minds. I cannot but own that the noble Simplicity that appear'd in the Character of *Valeria* in the *English* Play, her steady Friendship to her Friend *Horatia*, her warm Affection to her Brother, her impartial Firmness of Mind where that Impartiality is call'd for, join'd to the most amiable Female Softness, makes it impossible to compare these two additional Characters

Characters without giving the Preference so justly due to Mr. *Whitehead's Valeria*. Yet I still doubt whether the *Sabine of Corneille* is not the properest Character to be added to this Story, as doubling the Distress which I before mention'd, and likewise by giving an Opportunity for that fine Scene in the Third Act, where the two Women contend whose is the harder Lot, one being a Wife, and the other only bethroth'd to her Lover.

As I am only writing a Letter to my Friend, I have run through the Characters in a Sort of a careless Way, without Form or Method, and in the same Manner will I now consider the Conduct of the *French Play* as to its Incidents and Scenes, and leave it to you to compare it with the *English*.

The first Act of *Corneille* consists of only three Scenes. The two first are design'd chiefly to let you into the Characters of the two principle Women of the Play, to relate the Oracle, and to raise the Hopes of the Audience as well as of *Camille*; and the third Scene by the coming of *Curiace*, seems to confirm those Hopes, and prepares them to share in the Disappointment of their Heroine.

The second Act contains eight Scenes, and is much fuller of Action than the first. *Curiace* here congratulates his Friend on the Glory of his being chosen (with his Brothers) his Country's Champion, and says he trembles for the Freedom of *Alba*. Young *Horace*  
mo-

modestly answers, that *Rome* has most Cause to fear, from the Unworthiness of her Choice. *Flavian* now enters to acquaint *Curiace* that he and his Brothers are appointed to engage the *Horatii*, and here is on the Occasion a fine Scene between the two Friends. On *Camille's* entering, young *Horace* gives her the same Injunctions as I think I remember *Publius* gives *Horatia* in the *Roman Father*, and then goes out. A tender Scene follows; between *Curiace* and *Camille*. Young *Horace* returns, and *Sabine* with him, and the two Women endeavour as much as possible to prevail with the two Heroes to decline the Combat. The old Man enters, and shews a true *Roman Spirit*, by his Fears that Female Prayers should prevail on *Horace* or *Curiace* to desert the Cause of Glory. The Women leave them, and old *Horace* exhorts the young Champion to behave valiantly.

In the second Act you will see an Opportunity given, by *Curiace's* being introduced; for several fine and tender Scenes, which, for want of that Character, cannot be in the *English Play*.

The third Act opens with *Sabine*; and she indeed has the strongest Part throughout this as well as the two foregoing Acts; she alone has her Hopes and Fears alarm'd by *Julia's* News, that the People, touch'd with the moving Sight of such dear Friends assailing each other in Arms, had proposed to change the Combatants,



tants, and that (as they themselves had refused the Offer) it was left to the Determination of the Gods. This, and the following Scene where *Camille* enters, abound with good Sentiments; and the next Scene, where the two Women contend whose is the harder Lot, I have already mentioned. Old *Horace* then joins the Women, and while they are all in equal Suspense, the fifth Scene follows, in which *Julie* brings the News of the Death of two of the *Horatii*, and the Flight of the third; but in this noble Scene Mr. *Whitehead* has so closely follow'd *Corneille*, that I own, I thought he had fully equal'd if not excell'd him. Nor shall I add more concerning this Act, than only to say, that I think it abounds with noble Sentiments and fine Scenes.

In the Beginning of the Fourth Act, the *English* Poet has again pretty closely follow'd the *French*, nor need I mention the well known Beauties of that Scene, wherein *Valeria* undeceives old *Horace* about his Son's Flight. The Soliloquy of *Camille* in the fourth Scene, is I think (as I have before observed) very beautiful, and her meeting her Brother with Curfes, is exactly after the Story in *Livy*. Why the *French* Poet has not suffered young *Horatius* to kill his Sister on the Stage, or why the *English* Poet has follow'd him in that Conduct, I cannot tell, and should be glad to hear your Sentiments upon that Point.

But



But to me the Conduct of the *English* Play, by making *Publius* stay behind his Sister, and meet her a second Time before he stabs her, takes off all the Excuse we could make for the Brother in that rash Act, and makes it not only a cruel, but a premeditated, Act of Inhumanity.

I think *Sabine's* coming in, and begging her Husband to add her to her lost Brothers and her Friend that he had that Day kill'd, is strongly in Character, and shows a great Sisterly Affection for her Brothers, and strong Friendship for the unfortunate *Camille*, and is indeed a very beautiful Scene. And so much I have to say for the fourth Act.

But, as to the fifth, little I own can be said for it, but that in the Pleading it contains some noble Sentiments. It is certainly too languid for the fifth Act of a Tragedy, and is much more proper to begin a Play than to end one.

As I have only once seen the *Roman Father*, I would not pretend from my Memory to go thro' a Comparison of the two Plays, but have given you my present Thoughts upon *Corneille*, and beg that when you have read the *English* Play you would compare it carefully with the *French*, and give me your Sentiments freely on both. And I believe you will then confess that the *Roman Father* to the Action alone owes the Preference we at first gave it to the *Horace* of *Corneille*.

Having

Having run into much greater Length than  
I at first intended, I shall only add, that I am,  
dear Sir,

Your sincere Friend,  
and humble Servant,  
W. FREEMAN.

The ANSWER.

S I R,

March 7th 1733.

I Thank you for your Letter, which I de-  
ferr'd answering till I had an Opportunity  
from the Publication of the *Roman Father*, to  
read it over, and compare it with the *Horace*  
of *Cornelle*. I am obliged to you, that on all  
Occasions you send me your Sentiments so  
freely, and I rejoice in the Thought that we  
really enjoy that most pleasing, as well as  
most noble Privilege of Friendship; namely,  
that when we speak to each other, we may  
properly be said to think aloud.

Your breaking forth into a sort of Rapture  
on the very Name and Memory of your fa-  
vourite Author, has (give me leave to say) an  
Appearance of less Impartiality, than I have  
generally found in your Mind. But you know,  
my Friend, it is our constant Custom when  
any Difference of Opinion arises between us,  
freely to tell each other, if we perceive any  
latent Motive in the Mind for that Difference,  
other than the Desire of forming our Judgments,  
according to the real Merit of whatever is then

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under our Consideration : And here I confess, that it appears to me, that your long settled Admiration of *Corneille*, does create some Difficulty in your Mind, in the allowing suddenly a Preference to another Author, exerting his Genius on the same Subject with your long admir'd Friend ; this is a kind of Partiality so natural, and has its Foundation in so laudable a Motive, that no Man has any cause to blush for it, whilst, like you, he keeps Possession of Candour enough to prevent his being unjust. When I had only seen this Play one Night, and indeed till I had read it, I would not suffer myself to fix any settled Judgment of the Performance, because I confess (with you) that an Actor who excels in the Power of touching the Passions, is to me a kind of Magician, who turns and winds my Mind for the present as he pleases ; and the *Roman Father* in this respect, had all the Advantage it is possible for human Art to exert.

When I had read Mr. *Whitehead's* Play, I still continued of Opinion, that in all the principal Characteristicks of a good Tragedy, the *English Roman Father* excels *Corneille's Horace*, and what is much stronger, even after having read your Letter. And when I have given you my Reasons for it, I doubt not but you will judge candidly between both ; for I know your Mind much too  
noble

noble to harbour any false Shame for having been in a Mistake, and much too ingenuous not to acknowledge Truth, the Moment you perceive it.

The Fable of the two Plays are the same; so that if there is a Fault in the double Action, if I may so call it, of the Play, by young *Horatius's* falling into a second Danger, just as he is relieved from the first, (which *Corneille* in his own Examen of this Piece seems to allow,) it is an incurable one, and we must either suffer it, or deny the Story to be at all proper for a Play. If the Sister's Distress and Death were excluded from the Play, it would be a Tragedy without any Distress at all, except in that one Instance, where old *Horatius* thinks his Son is fled; for we cannot pity, we cannot weep for old *Horatius* whilst fired with Glory, he enjoys with Raptures the Honour done his Sons, in being chose their Country's Champions: and *Publius Horatius*, whilst all other Considerations fall before that grand *Roman* Virtue, the Love of his Country, and he and his Brothers by the general Voice stand forth the Defenders, the Protectors of the *Roman* State, is not the Object of Compassion. Who then shall we find to pity? Shall we exclude *Horatia* from the Play, and in the midst of the *Roman* Triumph, shall we in her Stead mourn the vanquish'd *Curiatii*, and weep the Fall of the conquer'd Heroes?



and, if we admit her Distress and Death, her Character, the natural Turns of her Mind, her Passions, fluctuating between Hopes and Fears, seem adapted to raise the proper Contention in the Minds of the *Horatii*, between Glory and Affection, and to give their Humanity an Opportunity of exerting itself, that they might not continually break forth in one Blaze of Glory.

I allow, that excluding the Character of *Sabine*, *Corneille* has kept more closely to the Story told by *Livy*, than the *English* Author; and in the Character of the *Horatii*, he seldom goes a Step farther than he is authoriz'd by *Livy*; and yet we may observe, he thought some Humanity necessary to be put into the Mouth of old *Horatius*, by that very short Sketch of it he makes him utter when he parts from his Son, and his design'd Son-in-law, for the Battle. But there is a wide Difference between altering a Story, and adding to that Story, the Sensations naturally produc'd by such Situations, and such Matters of Fact as the Historian relates. It is the proper Business of History to relate Matters of Fact, it is the proper Business of Tragedy to convey to our Minds such Sensations as the principal Persons concerned in such Transactions may be supposed to have felt on such Occasions; and if keeping so closely to a Story as only to relate it be a Beauty, a good Translation of *Livy* well



well read on the Stage, would be as good a Play perhaps, as this Story can produce. But if it can be proved, as I really think it may, that as *Livy* told us what the *Horatii* did, the *English* Play has told us what they felt; then I think its Beauties must be incontestable. The grand Fault I have always in my own Mind found with this Story for a Play, as it stands in *Corneille*, was, that whatever Admiration the Hero (especially considering him as a *Roman*) might raise in my Mind, yet could he never raise one Spark of Love or Pity; and as *Corneille* has contrived it, I do not pity his Women so much, as I should think their Situations would naturally demand. *Camille* is too full of Rage in her Curses, and *Sabine* has too little Affection for her Husband, to raise in my Mind that Pity which Distress arising from disappointed Affection, and not Rage, produces. Now if the *English* Play has raised that Pity even from the Beginning, not only for *Horatia*, but for the *Horatii*, in every Instance where they are distressed; I think in that respect, we must give the Preference where it is so justly due.

It would sound perhaps exceeding odd at first sight, to say, that *Corneille* himself has given the Preference to the *English* Play, and yet I do think it may be proved. For all the Faults he allows in his own *Horace*, except that incurable one already mentioned of the second  
 Danger

Danger of young *Horace*, are cured in the *English*.

“ As I am not accustomed to dissemble my  
 “ Faults, (says *Corneille*) I find here two or  
 “ three very considerable ones : The first is,  
 “ that the Death of *Camille*, which becomes  
 “ the principal Action in the Piece, is mo-  
 “ mentaneous, and has not that just Grandeur  
 “ which *Aristotle* demands, and which con-  
 “ sists in a Beginning, a Middle, and an End ;  
 “ it surprizes us at once, and all the Prepara-  
 “ tion that I have given for it, by the paint-  
 “ ing of the fierce Virtue of *Horace*, and by  
 “ the Prohibition he gives his Sister to regret  
 “ which ever should fall, her Lover or her  
 “ Brother, is not sufficient to made us expect  
 “ so extraordinary an Event, and serve for the  
 “ Beginning of this Action.” Now that this  
 is cured in the *English*, by that noble Turn of  
 Mind in *Horatia*, from Suspence to Despair,  
 and by her letting the Audience know she is  
 resolutely bent to provoke her Brother to de-  
 stroy her, cannot I think be deny'd ; at the  
 same time also is cured the Necessity of giving  
 him that brutal Fierceness, that robs him of  
 all our Compassion.

The second Fault *Corneille* allows, is, that  
 second Danger of young *Horace*, which, I  
 say, cannot be cured, if the Story is allow'd  
 of at all.

“ Add

“ Add for the third Imperfection (says  
 “ *Corneille*) that *Camille*, who has but the se-  
 “ cond Rank in the first three Acts, and  
 “ leaves the first to *Sabine*, takes the first in  
 “ the two last, where *Sabine* is no longer  
 “ considerable; and thus, if there is any Equa-  
 “ lity preserved in the Manners, there is none  
 “ in the Dignity of the Personages, to which  
 “ this Precept of *Horace* should extend.”

——— *Servetur ad imum*

*Qualis ab incepto processerit, & sibi constet.*

This is perfectly cured by the Character of *Sabine* being left out; which, as it was a Character of *Corneille*'s Invention, and not in the *Roman* Story, the Author had certainly a Right to omit: And which additional Character, I think (pardon me, you know I speak freely) you lie under a very great Mistake, in thinking a Beauty in *Corneille*; but of this I shall say more when I come to the Characters.

“ All this fifth Act (says *Corneille*) is one  
 “ of the Reasons of the small Satisfaction this  
 “ Tragedy has given. It is all a Pleading,  
 “ and this is not a Place for Harrangues and  
 “ long Discourses: They may better be suf-  
 “ fer'd in the Beginning of a Play, where the  
 “ Action is not yet warm; but in the fifth  
 “ Act, Action is more necessary than Dis-  
 “ course: The Attention of the Audience,  
 “ already

“ already weary’d, cannot bear these Cōclu-  
 “ sions which linger and are drawn out into  
 “ Length.”

This, I think, is in a manner cured in the *English* Play, by the Introduction of *Horatia* into the fifth Act; and the many Breaks and various Contrivances to affect our Passions; but to this I will speak more particularly when I come to consider the Conduct of the Play in the fifth Act.

“ As to the Time (says *Corneille*) the Acti-  
 “ on is not too much pressed; and appears to  
 “ me to have nothing in it but what is with-  
 “ in the bounds of Probability.”

Here the two Plays are equal; for the Time is the same in both; the Place also is the same in both; with this Difference only, that what *Corneille* finds fault with in his own Play, namely, the Separation of young *Horace* and *Curia* from the rest of the Family, to begin the second Act, is avoided in the *English*; for *Curia*, and I think very judiciously, does not appear at all. Thus whatever Fault *Corneille* imputes to his own Performance being cured in the *English*, so far he himself may be said, I think, to give it the Preference.

Having mentioned the Story, the Time, and the Place, in which the *French* and the *English* Plays agree, except that those Faults which *Corneille* gives up are cured in the *English*, where there was a Possibility of  
 a Cure,



a Cure, and yet preserving the Story ; I will now speak of the Characters : I will place them as fairly as I can in Opposition to each other, and then leave you to judge which is to be prefer'd.

*The Character of old Horatius in the English Play.*

Old *Horatius* was a true *Roman* ; his whole Soul was inraptur'd with the Love of Glory ; *Rome* and Freedom ingrossed his Thoughts ; the private Ties of Nature gave Way to the publick Welfare, the publick Glory, and the publick Power : But yet, thus fired with the Love of his Country, thus ardent for Fame, thus overpower'd (if I may be allow'd the Expression) with the zealous Desire of *Rome's* present Freedom, and her future Empire, a Parent's Tenderness claim'd a Share in his Patriot Breast : the Sorrows of *Horatia* sometimes subdued his Heart, and forced him to remember he was a Father. Had he been animated with less Zeal for Glory, his Tenderness had not found Obstacles enough to have formed that beautiful Distress in his Mind on *Horatia's* Account, nor could his Resolution have been strong enough to have sacrificed his private Family for the publick Honour : And had his Fondness for his Daughter, even from her Infancy, been less conspicuous, what would it have been extraordinary in a *Roman* to have given up his Family to the publick Freedom ? 'Tis this

part of his Character that gives old *Horatius* the Power of moving our Passions and affecting our Hearts, and his Tenderneſs breaks upon us with ſo much the greater Force, as it ſtruggles through a Blaze of Glory; had the Love of Glory been his only Paſſion, he could with no Propriety have ſaid,

“ Oh! my divided Heart— ”

nor could thoſe four Words have had ſuch a ſurprizing Effect on our Minds as I cannot deſcribe, and which, I am ſure, you cannot forget. Had it not been for his Tenderneſs, old *Horatius* would have had a broad Path to have walked in, no thorny Briars to have ſtopt him in his Way, *Rome's* Triumph by the Means of the choſen Champions had elated his whole Soul to the higheſt Pitch of human Happineſs, or *Rome* vanquiſh'd and enſlaved, (his conquer'd Sons the Cauſe) had at one Stroke driven him to Deſpair.

*The Character of old Horace in Corneille.*

Old *Horace* loves Glory, but is not totally poſſeſſed by it; not enough to hide a Spark of Tenderneſs that breaks forth at parting with his Son, and deſign'd Son-in-Law. Revenge againſt his Son indeed is vaſtly uppermoſt when he hears of his Flight; but his Senſibility at this Diſgrace, ſeems too ſtrong, more than adequate

adequate to any Joy he expresses at his Sons beng chose the Champions of *Rome*. In the *English* Play, we are prepared by the Raptures the old Man expresses at his Boys being thus trusted, thus honoured by their Country, for the highest Agonies, the loudest Calls for Revenge on that Son, who he imagined had by coward Flight disgraced his Family, brought an eternal Infamy on his Name, and betray'd his Country. In the *French*, the old Man seems the Hero of an Hour; and his Behaviour in the End of the third Act, noble as it is, rather appears the Effect of sudden Enthusiasm, than what we should naturally expect from his foregoing Character. But you ingeniously acknowledge the great Superiority of Mr. *Whitehead's* old *Horatius* to *Corneille's* old *Horace*; therefore I will dwell no longer on this Character.

*Publius Horatius in the English Play.*

*Publius Horatius* inherits his Father's publick Spirit and Love of Glory; in his Youth blazes forth in its brightest Lustre all the raging Flame that old Age had stifled and smother'd into Smoke in the Father, and his firm Arm and unshaken Nerves could execute what from the old Man could only break forth in Words, and show itself in vain Transports of Joy and fruitless Rapture. *Publius* cou'd go forth arm'd his Country's Champion, old *Horatius*, like

*Nestor* in *Homer*, could only talk of Deeds past, and from a Relation of his former Actions, animate the Youth by their Valour to acquire future Fame. His interrupting *Valerius* in the interesting Account he is giving of the present Times to talk of the former, is inimitably beautiful. But I am rambling from the Character of *Publius*, who inherited his Father's Tenderness as well as his Valour; his Sensibility was too great not to feel the Shock of contending with his Friends, nor perhaps could he have contended with them, had it been for Life; but when it became a Contest which should be an Empire, *Alba* or *Rome*; when his Country had trusted its future Fate on the Conduct and Bravery of his Family alone; all other Thoughts fled from his Bosom, and in the *Roman* Patriot, the Friend was lost. *Publius* loved his Friend, and loved his Sister, whilst he fought with the one and destroyed the other; he could fight, he could weep for them, but his Country he worshipp'd; for her would willingly bleed and die himself, and to her he would sacrifice not only her Enemies in Action, but also her Enemies even in Thought. In *Publius* we see *Horatius* in the Vigour of Youth, and in *Horatius* we behold the future *Publius* with his Strength decayed, his Vigour lost, his Love of Glory only remaining to prove what he once was. Sameness of Character, I confess, I do not much admire, but in Father and Son 'tis not only excusable  
but



but justifiable ; nay, to speak my own Sentiment, I think it a Beauty ; the same Habits, the same Education make it probable it should be so ; besides, in these two Characters there is a strong Difference, in the greater Tenderness of the Father, the superior Sternness of the Son.

*Young Horace in the French Play.*

Young *Horace* is bold, valiant, undaunted, resolute ; is fired with a most ardent Love of his Country, but joined to such a savage Ambition of Glory, that he makes a Boast of his unfeeling Heroism, and his strong Desire of engaging his Friends ; his Fierceness resembles that of a Lyon or Tyger, rather than the settled Resolution of Man-like Firmness ; in the *Roman* he loses his Humanity, and to prove himself a Patriot, he forgets that he is to sustain at the same time the Character of a Man ; nor does he shew by any Signs of Affection, that he owns the Names of Husband or Brother. This brutal Character *Corneille* seems to think necessary to bring on *Camilla's* Death ; how beautiful then is the Contrivance, that by a natural and easy Incident brings on her Death, and at the same time suffers us to lament and pity *Publius* for the Action ? His Love of Glory is equal in the *French* and *English* Play, but in the *French*, Brutality is the  
Charac-

Characteristick of his Mind, and in the *English*, Humanity.

*The King's Character in the English Play.*

The King is humane, a Lover of his People, zealous for the *Roman* Glory ; but yet willing to preserve the Lives of his Subjects. I know his general Character in History is that of a warlike Prince ; but as the *Horatii* must be the warlike Heroes of the Tragedy, I think it was very judicious to let the King appear in no other Light than as a Lover of his People. In *Corneille*, the *Alban* Dictator is related to have proposed the Truce ; how much more beautiful is it in the *English*, that the Proposal should come from the *Roman* King, who by being introduced on the Stage we have some Acquaintance with, than from the Dictator of the *Albans*, who never appears, and with whom we have no other Acquaintance in the Tragedy than what the Relation of this one Proposal gives us.

*Corneille* indeed follows *Livy* more closely than Mr. *Whitehead*, for in *Livy* the Dictator of the *Albans*, and not *Tullus Hostilius*, proposes the Truce ; but as I said before, *Livy* wrote a History, and not a Tragedy ; nor can it be properly called departing from the History, as the Truce itself is related, to change the Proposers of it ; nor is it changing the Characters in any essential Point, where one Person proposes,

poses, and the other readily agrees to it. And then introducing the King so early in the Play, is, in my Opinion, not only proper but beautiful, as it gives an Opportunity for those characteristick Speeches of *Publius Horatius*, when the King bids him try well his Heart; and no-body but the King could do it. Old *Horatius*, in the midst of his Rapture, that his Sons were chose for the Combat, would not one Moment have born the Thought that either of them could have admitted any Consideration to have weigh'd one Grain in the Balance against the Thoughts of supporting their Country's Cause, and *Publius Horatius* himself would not have suffered a meaner Person to have declared one Doubt of his failing in his Duty; but it is one of the principal Beauties of the *English* Play, that we are thoroughly acquainted with each Character by their first Appearance, and I believe I may justly say, that not one of them throughout the whole, either once speaks or acts contrary to our Opinion, form'd from their first Appearance.

*The King's Character in the French Play.*

The King does not appear till the fifth Act; where he has really so little of Character to sustain, that I am at a Loss what to say of him: four or five Speeches, I think, is all he speaks, and his Praises of *Horace* for preserving

serving his Crown, does not seem so much calculated to speak to the *Roman* People, as in the *English*, where the King tells the Citizens, that their Freedom was preserved by the Hands of *Publius Horatius*.

*Valerius in the English Play.*

*Valerius* has not the Charecteristick of a *Roman* given him to appear in; the *Horatii* so nobly shine in that Character, that it would have been too great a Sameness to have made another Hero fir'd with the Love of Glory; therefore the only Light we can see *Valerius* in, is that of a young Man, who is, what is commonly called, in Love; that is, he is seized with a violent Passion for *Horatia*, which he is resolved to gratify, if Art or Industry can bring about his Purpose: and we may certainly say that every Speech he utters, and every Step he takes, tends to that Design.

*Valere in Corneille.*

*Valere* appears not till the fourth Act, and then only as a Messenger, to bring the News of young *Horace's* Victory to his Father. Tho' the News is indeed important, yet here is no Room for *Valere* to shew himself in any Light from which one might collect his Character; and as we have had so little Acquaintance



tance with him, we wonder how he comes to be of so much Importance in the last Act, as to stand forth as the Accuser of young *Horace*. *Corneille* himself does not justify this Conduct; however he excuses it by saying he could find no Place to introduce him before: But then we must grant the superior Contrivance of the *English* Poet, who has made his *Valerius* of some Consequence from the Beginning of the Play, and cured what even *Corneille* thinks worthy of Excuse.

*Curiace in Corneille only.*

*Curiace* has just as much Softness and Humanity as can consist with a religious Adherence to the Service of his Country; even when that Country demands his giving up all his tenderest, private Engagements for her Welfare; his Love of Glory, and his Country's Honour, subdued, but not extirpated all his softer Sensations: This you say is a proper and a beautiful Contrast to the Brutality of *Horace*; I would have allow'd the Truth of your Observation, had *Corneille* intended *Curiace* the Hero of his Play; had he design'd his Audience should have detested young *Horace*, looked at him with Horror, and on his Account have found but one only Cause for Grief; namely, that the *Roman* Citizens had not condemn'd him to a shameful Death. *Corneille*, if alive, would not thank you for

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saying

saying this was his Design, and yet this naturally follows his Characters of young *Horace* and *Curia*. The *English* Author has judiciously blended in his *Publius* the Dignity of the highest Heroism, with all the Softness of Humanity; in the Contention of the two Passions in his Breast, he has contrived to make his Audience sympathize with his Hero; and he at once raises our highest Admiration, and calls forth all our Pity. In introducing *Curia*, *Corneille* has divided all the Characters, he has taken the Humanity from his Hero, to adorn his second Character with it, and he has carried this Softness to such a Height, that it is hardly consistent with the Firmness of Mind necessary for such a Combat; it degenerates almost to Weakness, and robs his Women of their Right of complaining. Instead of the Complaints of one Woman, *Curia*, *Sabine* and *Camille* divide between them their Complaints for one Cause; and in different Dresses almost utter the same Sentiments: and the same Images being so often convey'd to our Minds, become languid and lose their Force.

*Flavian* in *Corneille*, is the Messenger to *Curia* of that interesting News, that he and his Brothers were nominated by *Alba* to engage the *Horatii*; but as he has no other Business in the Play, we know nothing of his Character.

And

And now, I think, I have gone through the Characters of the Men ; and will consider whether the making the double Alliance, and the introducing *Sabine*, will answer the Purposes you seem to imagine.

*The Character of Horatia in the English Play.*

*Horatia* was bred up in the *Horatian* Family, in the strictest Principle of the Love of her Country ; this was fix'd in her Mind from her Infancy, and as her Stature increased, so did this Principle take deeper Root in her Breast. Her Love of *Curatius* alone came to dispute its Power, a Love just on the brink of being compleated, sanctified by her Father's Choice, no bar but the publick Contentions between *Rome* and *Alba*. Her Prayers and Tears being daily pour'd forth for Peace, when she was suddenly shock'd with the News, that either *Curatius* must fall by the Hands of the *Horatii*, or that she must receive her Husband adorn'd with the cruel Spoils of her Brothers Blood. Perhaps it would be difficult to place a Woman in a Situation much more dreadful ; here in *Horatia* again is the Contention of Passions, necessary to make a Tragedy ; *Horatia's* Soul was overpower'd by Love, and yet that Love was contested in her Breast, by a strong Desire of conforming her Conduct to the strictest Principles of a *Roman* Virgin. *Horatia*, born and bred in the Family of the *Horatii*, shared

their Spirit, their Love of Glory, and their undaunted Resolution; Death she could have faced, as she herself says; but the warring Passions that contended in her Bosom, were too strong for all her Resolutions; the *Horatian* Blood that ran in her Veins, flow'd with too much Vigour, to suffer Softness to be her Characteristick; and had not the Love of *Curiatius* intervened, she would have shared the Glory of her Family even to her Father's Wish; had she not fix'd in her Mind, as the first Principle of her Religion a strong Love for her Country, had Affection and Softness wholly possess'd her; she would have wept her Husband's Fall, but could not have work'd herself up to that Rage, in which she pours forth all those Curses on *Rome*, which very naturally brought on her Death by her Brother's Hand; had she had less Affection for *Curiatius*, she had had no Contention in her Mind to have form'd her Distress; had she possessed less Spirit and *Horatian* Love of Glory, Curses would not have been her natural Vent for Affliction.

*The Character of Camille in Corneille.*

*Camille* is of so fearful and desponding a Temper, that even an Oracle can only, for a very short Time, give her Mind any fixed Hope of her Afflictions being ended; she lets common Dreams conquer all her Confidence  
in



in the Oracle, which by the way is impious in her, considering that the Dependence on Oracles was Part of the Religion of the *Romans*. *Camille* is soon elated with the Prospect of any approaching private Happiness, but soon again depressed by the distant View of a Disappointment; does not shew Violence of Passion enough, to make us expect from her such daring Behaviour to her Brother, nor does she interest us enough in her Favour, to raise in our Minds the proper Compassion, tho' we detest her Brother for the Action; nor is her Character in *Corneille*, in my Opinion, half so strong as you have represented it, not purposely I am very certain. But have you not without being conscious of it, (a very common Case) taken your Idea of *Camille*, from Mr. *Whitehead's Horatia*? And I must so far contradict you here, as to say it was most truly unnatural, for such a Character as *Camille's*, to meet her Brother in that raging Fury, and this *Corneille* himself confesses. In short, was *Camille* as gentle as you have represented her, her Death could not have happen'd in *Corneille's* manner; and if her Affections had been as strong as you suppose, the News of her Husband's Death had not left her Mind at Liberty, to have made all those cool Reflections in the Soliloquy you mention. The Truth is, *Corneille* was divided between two Characters, almost in the same Situation, and being sometimes warm'd with his *Sabine*, and sometimes with  
his

his *Camille*, he has drawn only a faint Sketch of the latter, with nothing strong or striking in her Character, till she suddenly breaks forth into that amazing Fury, in the fifth Scene of the fourth Act. And give me leave to say that in this respect, you are more Partial to your favourite *Corneille*, than he is to himself.

*Sabine* and *Valeria*, you say truly, are both Characters of the Poet's Invention; they are such different Characters, that we can only observe which is most necessary to the Play; you give it on the Side of *Sabine*, tho' the natural Candour of your Mind cannot help breaking forth in wanton Praises of *Valeria*; all you say of her is just; she appears as a very uncommon Character on the Stage. *Valeria* is A FRIEND: \* "*She has Tears for others Woes, and Patience for her own.*" The Mists of Passion blind her not, her Mind on her own Account still calm and undisturbed, only feels her Friend's Misfortunes. She is impartial in her Judgment, cool in her Actions, tho' warm in her Affections; she has no wish but what centers in the Happiness of the Family in which she is then a Guest; and altho' her own Mind is not agitated by strong Passions, yet we see her play a considerable and a necessary Part, in almost every Scene. Characters of this Kind, we are very apt to pay too little Regard to, they do not alarm and

\* Mrs. Leeper's Poems.

and set our own Passions on Fire, as those Characters do which are blown into Storms by every gust of outward Accident. The Sailor who has spent his Life at Sea, in the Recital of his Adventures, passes over every pleasant Hour he has enjoy'd in a serene Sky ; but fixes on the Moment of a Storm, throws himself out in the Description of it, brings back the Scene to his own Remembrance, as well as paints it to the Imagination of his attentive Hearers, talks of every hideous Wave and Billow ; whilst perhaps the Pilot, who by commanding his own Fears, and keeping his Mind calm, preserved the Ship, is forgot, and sunk in Oblivion in his relation.

The Character of *Sabine* is inconsistent. She talks of Constancy of Mind, and restraining her Tears, yet are her Apprehensions as strong as *Camille's* ; sometimes she will be a *Roman* ; sometimes her own Country, the Place of her Birth, possesses all her Thoughts. Between *Camille* and *Sabine*, you say, is again that beautiful Contrast, as was before between *Horace* and *Curiace* ; but here again, I say, *Sabine* only robs *Camille* of her Complaints ; and instead of a Contrast of Characters, there is only a Confusion ; many of *Sabine's* Speeches would have done full as well for *Camille*, and many of *Camille's* had as naturally flow'd from the Mouth of *Sabine*. The *English Horatia* in every Agony of her Mind makes some Preparation for the Catastrophy of her Death ;  
the

the *French Sabine* says not one Word, as I remember, that conduces to any one Action in the Play. And as to what you say, that the introduction of *Sabine* produces that fine Scene in the third Act, of their Contention, which was in the most deplorable Situation; to speak my real Sentiments, I think that Scene has no other tendency, than to destroy in us every grain of Pity for those two *Heroines* of the Play. For tho' indeed it is very natural for selfish Minds, by the Assistance of their Imaginations, to lessen the Misfortunes of others, whilst they heighten their own; yet cannot I think the Representation of such selfish Minds, properly calculated to raise any Compassion in a judicious feeling Audience. Had *Corneille* been writing a Burlesque on the Friendship of Women, this indeed, with the Words a little varied into such as we call more Comic, had been very proper to have answered his Purpose. Naturally might you and I sit down coolly, to consider whose Situation was most to be lamented, *Sabine's* or *Camille's*; but for *them* to be selfishly making light of each others Burthens, proves nothing, but that they affected to feel more strongly, than they were capable of feeling; and in that Scene they are to me, rather the Objects of Contempt than Compassion; and *Corneille* when he wrote it, appears as he had introduced two Women, rather to want Matter to fill up both their Characters, than judiciously to imagine this to  
be



be a proper Dialogue to fall from the Mouths of the Heroines of Tragedy, design'd to move our Passions and affects our Hearts ; but indeed all that you say for the Introduction of *Sabine*, in my Opinion answers itself, when, as I before said, the natural Candour of your Mind breaks forth, in confessing the indisputable Excellence of *Valeria*.

The double Alliance, the double Love-story, I own was more adapted to the *French* Genius, as it is their Taste to have all their Stories turn on Love ; but I was greatly pleas'd to find, our judicious *English* Author had kept his *Valeria* free from any other Motive to her Actions than Friendship. I was even afraid every Scene, the first Night I saw the Play, lest he should have fallen into the beaten Track, by making *Valeria* in Love with *Publius* ; to my great Delight, he avoided it, and instead of *Corneille* having made the Contrast you speak of, 'tis Mr. *Whitehead* has done it. The *French Sabine* makes only, as I have said before, a Confusion of Characters ; the *English Valeria* is a beautiful Contrast of a Woman guided by Reason, and directed by Judgment, to a Woman, under the Influence of tempestuous contending Passions.

The Character of *Julie* in *Corneille*, is only a common Female-Confidant to *Camille* and *Sabine*, obliged to hear their Complaints ; nor do I see any other use she is of in the Play,

till to my great Astonishment she brings the important News to old *Horace*, of the Flight of his Son, which causes that fine Scene at the End of the third Act. *Valeria*, whose Character we are so well acquainted with, and whose Anxiety to view the Event of the Combat, had been before so properly raised by her Friend's Agonies, declares the Flight of *Publius* to his Father, with great Propriety, and naturally induces the beautiful Scene which follows it.

I think, I have now gone through the Characters of each Play, and have dwelt the longer on them, as I think the chief Merit of a Dramatic Writer, is the drawing strong Characters, and making them consistent through the whole. The Fable in Poetry justly holds the first Place, in the same Manner as the Story does in a Picture. A Man may shew his Judgment in the Choice of his Fable, or Subject; yet his Genius, as a Poet or a Painter, can only exert itself: *this* in the Disposition and finishing his Figures; *that* in the Contrivance of Incidents, and heightening his Characters. And, tho' I confess that *Corneille* has given us some fine Sketches, yet it is Mr. *Whitehead* that has finish'd them in so masterly a Manner, that our Judgments are satisfied, whilst our Imaginations are pleased.

But now, having finish'd the Characters, I will, by going through the Scenes, endeavour to shew you, that you have suffer'd an uncommon

common Partiality to steal on your Mind, in the Representation of the Conduct of *Corneille's Horace* : In which, the first and second Scenes are intended, as you justly say, to let us into the Characters of the two principal Women ; but if you will attend to these two Scenes closely, you will perceive that Intention is not answered ; for these two Characters differ not enough (as I have observed) to let us know what properly to expect from either of them.

What you say concerning the Beauties of the Oracle, in the first Act, considering the *Roman* Custom of consulting Oracles, I do not dispute ; but then the little Use that is made of it, according to *Corneille's* own Confession, takes away the Efficacy of it ; and the introducing the Dream immediately after the Oracle, is too much of imaginary Joy and Pleasure : and I confess the Simplicity of the *English*, where *Horatia's* Passions turn immediately on the alternate Hopes and Fears, raised by every Variation of the present Incidents, pleases me better.

The first Act of the *Roman Father*, opens with the Entrance of *Horatia*, earnestly enquiring News from that Field which contain'd the Objects of all her Fears, and all her Hopes ; and is told, that a decisive Battle was that Day, nay, that Hour expected. By this Means the Audience, as well as *Horatia*, are informed in a few Words, of the Situation of the

*Roman*, as well as of the *Alban* Affairs. And is not this Method of letting the Audience know the present Situation of the Heroes, to be prefer'd to that of their being inform'd by the Discourse of Persons concerning it, who were before acquainted with it themselves?

In the next Scene, *Valeria* enters to *Horatia*; and here, at once, we are perfectly acquainted with their Character. *Horatia*, by every Word she utters, shews her Mind torn and rent with divided Passions; *Valeria* shews no other Anxiety, but for her Friend's Peace of Mind.

Old *Horatius* appears in the third Scene, bringing the welcome News of the Truce, and the Conditions of it, leaves it to a younger Tongue to relate the Particulars, but with a Characteristic old Man's Loquacity, interrupts the very Narration he had desir'd, and fearful for the *Roman* State, trembles to trust her Cause in the Hands of so few Champions. But when *Valerius* declares the Decree is fix'd, beyond the Power of *Horatius* to alter it, can there be any thing greater, or more truly natural, (when we consider the Character of old *Horatius*) than his turning his Fear into Joy, by the very Idea that one of his Sons might be chose their Country's Champion. In short, our Expectations of the future Behaviour of *Horatius*, are firmly fix'd from this Scene; nor do I remember, that our Expectations are once disappointed throughout the



the whole, tho' sometimes, I think, the old Man even exceeds them.

In the fourth Scene, *Horatia* very naturally enquires for her Lover; her Behaviour on the Account *Valerius* flyly gives of his Coldness, is such as we must have expected from a Woman in her Situation: And in the next Scene, where *Valeria* chides her Brother for the foolishly cunning, and cruel Part he had acted, in alarming her Friend's Fears that *Curatius* had forgot her; we see that *Valeria* would not partially blind her Eyes to the Faults of those she loved, but was sincere enough in her Affection; to persuade them for their own Sakes, to avoid those Faults, and by what she says when her Brother has left her, she plainly proves, that she would not add to his Miseries, by giving him any Idea of her own Sorrows.

*Poor Youth! he knows not how I feel his  
Anguish,  
Yet dare not seem to pity what I feel.*

Compare these first Acts of the *French* and *English* Play, and I am certain you will acknowledge, how greatly the Advantage lies on the Side of the latter. In the *French*, we are told indeed the State of *Rome* and *Alba*, but it is related by two Persons conversing about it, with an intention only of Informing the Audience; whereas in the *English* Play,  
the

the Information is given to *Horatia*, anxiously seeking the News, and deeply interested in the Event. In the *French*, the utmost we can learn, is the Character of two Women, (tho' I have already told you, that I do not think we are much acquainted with them); in the *English*, the Characters of *Horatius*, *Horatia*, *Valerius*, and *Valeria*, are all plainly, and at one View set before our Eyes; we are anxious that the Father should obtain for his Family the Honour he so earnestly wishes, and our Minds (remembering he is a *Roman*) are properly led to sympathize with the undoubted Hero of the Play.

The Love of *Valere* for *Camille*, in the *French*, is quite useless; in the *English*, the Love of *Valerius* for *Horatia* is closely connected with the other Parts of the Play; and by being thus early introduced, gives rise to many Beauties. First, the occasional Distress it gives *Horatia*, by raising doubtful Fears in her Mind, that she was forgot by *Curatius*; then the Opportunity it gives *Valeria* to exert a noble Impartiality, one of the most shining Parts of her Character; and in the last Scene, where public Spirit was the only Plea before the *Romans*, that could induce them to pardon *Publius* the Death of his Sister, it must give a sudden Turn to the Minds of the Citizens, when they find that the Accusation of *Valerius* proceeded from a private Passion. I have here thrown together all I had to say concerning  
*Valerius*,

*Valerius*, tho' it extends to the last Act, to collect it, as much as possible together.

The second Act of the *Roman Father* opens with *Horatia* and *Valeria*, the former (by her calm and generous Friend) is just relieved from the Doubts *Valerius* had raised in her Mind, concerning her Lover's Constancy; the old Man enters in Transports, with the Tidings that all three of his Sons are chosen for the Combat; every Word he utters in this Scene is noble, and places before us a true *Roman Hero*; *Horatia* is alarm'd in some Degree for her Brothers; *Publius* enters; the Firmness of his Mind, and the Joy he expresses for the high Honour conferr'd on him by his Country, join'd to the Father's Transports, makes *Horatia* too, for the Moment, a perfect *Roman*, and no one Wish escapes her, against her Brother's approaching arduous Task; but she bends her Knees in Supplication to the Gods, that he may come off victorious, and adds a Curse on any one, who shall with a sad Brow disgrace his Triumph. As this Part to me is a very great Beauty, I must beg Leave to quote the whole Prayer, and the Curse.

*Horatia.* [Kneeling.

—Hear me, dread God of War, protect and save him!

For thee and thy immortal Rome he fights!

Dash the proud Spear from ev'ry hostile Hand

That dares oppose him; may each Alban Chief

Fly

*Fly from his Presence, or his Vengeance feel!*

[Rising.

*And when in Triumph he returns to Rome,  
Hail him ye Maids with grateful Songs of Praise;  
And scatter all the blooming Spring before him.  
Curs'd be the envious Brow that smiles not then,  
Curs'd be the Wretch that wears one mark of  
Sorrow,  
Or flies not thus with open Arms to greet him.*

How flat and unaffecting is the *Camille* of *Corneille*, when she says, that in offering up Vows for her Brother, she had offered them against her Lover, in comparison of the *Horatia* of Mr. *Whitehead*, when before our Eyes she utters that Prayer and Curse in the instant before the Discovery, that her Curse must turn upon herself, since her Brother could not come triumphant Home, unless the conquered *Curiatii* bled for his Victory; and the mixing this Curse with her Prayers, finely prepares us for all that follows.

The King himself comes to acquaint *Horatius* with the important News, that the *Curiatii*, were named the *Alban* Champions; and by this Means gives us a true Idea of the Respect that was paid by Majesty itself to a *Roman* Senator, who like *Horatius* was fired with his Country's Love. The King's Examination of the young Hero, whether he could stand so tender a Trial, as opposing his Sword to the Breast he loved, is, in my Opinion, far beyond any



any Scene in the second Act of *Corneille*. The noble Answers of *Publius* also gives an Opportunity for heightening the Father's Resentment against him in the third Act. Can there be any Comparison between *Flavius* telling *Curiatius* this important News, and the Discovery's being made with all the Dignity that Majesty can give it : When the King's Mind seems labouring with something he fears *Horatius* will dread to hear, how beautiful is it, that the old Man can have no Dread of any thing, but his Sons not being their Country's Champions.

*Horatius.*— *They have not sure  
Made choice of other Combatants—My Sons,  
Must they not fight for Rome ?*

*Horatia* hears that her BROTHERS are nominated to be exposed alone, to a dreadful Combat, with Sighs and Fears only ; but when she hears her LOVER is to be exposed to the dreadful Danger of encountering the *Horatii*, her Spirits will no longer support the Conflict, but her Friend's Arms receive her fainting. I know few Scenes fuller of Action than this, tho' 'tis caused by News brought from the *Alban* Camp ; for what I call Action in a Play, is the various Turns of the Minds of those Characters, which the Author, if he has done judiciously, has made us thoroughly acquainted with. 'Tis Action to me, whilst the King, fearful of being

H

deluded

deluded by a sudden show of Valour, dives in-  
to the very Thoughts of *Publius*, till he owns  
the Sensibility of his Heart towards his Friends,  
whilst at the same Time, he declares his fix'd  
Resolves to pursue his Duty. This gives the  
King an Opportunity of nobly distinguishing  
the firm Resolve of Virtue and of Reason, from  
brutal Force. What could have been more  
nobly invented by the Power of Man's Ima-  
gination, to raise all our Pity for the Heroes,  
that Instant about to oppose each other, Life  
for Life, to preserve their Country, than to  
convey at once to our Minds, all the tender  
Sensations these Heroes had ever felt for each  
other, by the Endearments of Friendship, even  
from their Childhood?

Did you observe the very great Beauty of the  
two following Speeches?

Tullus Hostilius.

—But yet consider,

*Is it an easy Task to change Affections ?  
In the dread Onset can your meeting Eyes  
Forget their usual Intercourse, and wear  
At once the Frown of War and stern Defence ?  
Will not each Look recal the fond Remembrance  
Of Childhood past, when the whole open Soul  
Breath'd cordial Love, and plighted many a Vow  
Of tend'rest Import ? Think on that, young Soldier,  
And tell me if thy Breast be still unmoved ?*

Publius.

Publius.

*Think not, O King, howe'er resolv'd on Combat,  
 I sit so loosely to the Bonds of Nature  
 As not to feel their Force. I feel it strongly.  
 I love the Curiatii, and would serve them  
 At Life's Expence: But here a nobler Cause  
 Demands my Sword: For all Connections else,  
 All private Duties are subordinate  
 To what we owe the public. Partial Ties  
 Of Son, and Father, Husband, Friend, or Brother,  
 Owe their Enjoyments to the public Safety,  
 And without that are vain.—Nor need we, Sir,  
 Cast of Humanity, and to be Heroes  
 Cease to be Men. As in our earliest Days,  
 While yet we learn'd the Exercise of War,  
 We strove together, not as Enemies,  
 Yet conscious each of his peculiar Worth,  
 And scorning each to yield; so will we now  
 Engage with ardent not with hostile Minds,  
 Not fired with Rage, but emulous of Fame.*

This Discourse ended, the King is so satisfied  
 with the Behaviour of *Publius* on the strictest  
 Examination of his inmost Thoughts, as to  
 say when he leaves him preparing for the  
 Battle,

*When next we meet, 'tis Rome and Liberty.*

Then how naturally does it follow, that old  
*Horatius*, warm'd with his Son's noble Answers  
 to the King, should fetch his own Sword to arm  
 him for the Field, and that the very Name of

that Sword should bring back to the old Man's Remembrance his own former valiant Deeds against his Country's Foes. Here, I confess, the old *Horatius* made me forget, for the present, all other Thoughts but such as concern'd the Death or Victory of *Publius* : But I cannot express what I felt, when in the sudden Turn of the old Man's Mind, from the Thoughts of his Son's Glory, to the softer Thoughts of a Parent for his Daughter's Afflictions, he says,

*I feel thy Sister's Sorrows like a Father.  
She was my Soul's Delight.—*

When old *Horatius* goes to fetch the Sword, and *Horatia* enters, I do not perceive a Possibility of altering this Scene, to convey to us stronger Images of the Sensations of *Publius* and *Horatia*, than what every Word they utter does convey. *Horatia*, tortured with her Griefs, begs of her Brother what she herself acknowledges to be impossible. The young Hero of the *English* Play does indeed become the Object of our Pity, whilst he is the Object of our Admiration, when speaking of his Sister's Tears and Entreaties, he says,

*—They may make  
My Task more hard, and my Soul bleed with-  
in me,  
But cannot touch my Virtue.*

This



This is a Character worthy our Attention, worthy to alarm our Hopes and Fears; but Brutality, tho' dignify'd with all the specious Names of Glory, can never raise in my Mind any other Passion than that of Hatred and Detestation; and it has been an Observation that has kept its Ground throughout all Ages, that Heroes in the Field have been most capable of tender Sensations at home: If this be true, how judiciously has Mr. *Whitehead* given this Tenderness to *Publius Horatius*? nay, if this Observation be true, tho' *Livy*, as an Historian, (as I have mentioned I think already) could only tell us the Matters of Fact; yet by relating the heroic Actions of *Horatius* in the Field, he in a manner proves him to be capable of these tender Sensations generally acknowledged to accompany courageous and valiant Minds. But this Softness shew'd in the Mind of *Publius*, seized my Imagination, and has made me ramble from my Purpose, which was to shew all the Beauties of this Scene; nor indeed is it very easy to follow my own Purpose, except by quoting almost every Speech in it. All the Turns of *Horatia's* Mind are so strongly, and yet so simply express'd, that her own Words alone can do her Thoughts Justice. *Publius* remains the firm Hero in his Resolves, and yet beautifully shews the affectionate Brother in his Sensations. And when the old Man enters with the Sword to arm his Son, he is again at once the *Roman* Patriot

Patriot and the tender Parent. But I will dwell no longer on the Beauties of this Act, for I have been warm'd with real Admiration of it into a greater Length than I intended; only give me leave to add, that *Horatia*, when she says,

*Alas ! forgive me Sir—I'm very wretched,  
Indeed I am—yet I will strive to stop  
This swelling Grief, and bear it like your  
Daughter.  
Do but forgive me, Sir.*

does by that short Speech, expressing her great Wretchedness, more powerfully excite my Tears, than I have Words to describe.

And now, my good Friend, will you, with your usual Candour, compare the second Acts of the *French* and *English* Plays, and tell me, if you can regret the Loss of those Scenes in which *Corneille's Curiace* is introduced, when you have considered the many great Beauties in this Act which I have named, with many more, which, if I was minutely to enumerate, would swell this Letter to a Volume, and take up much more Time than my present Leisure will admit? I believe when you come again coolly to reflect on those Scenes you praise in *Corneille*, you will not find them half so excellent as you at present imagine them; on which I have already partly observed in speaking of the Character of *Corneille's Curiace*;  
and

and I think I may venture to say, the Scene between *Curiace* and *Camille* is not natural, considering his Character ; nor could he have stood her Tears and Intreaties, without yielding, in the Disposition and Temper of Mind she found him ; namely, that of lamenting his own hard Fate, that he was to oppose his Friend in the Combat, and could find no Way to Glory but by the Death of *Horace*. It is very natural in the *English* Play for *Publius Horatius*, firmly resolved, tho' his Brother opposed him, to do his Duty, warm'd with his King's Approbation, and elated with his Father's Praises, to withstand the Tears of a Sister, tho' he could not but feel her Sorrows : But I cannot think it natural for *Curiace*, already soften'd, and lamenting that he was to have such Opposers in the Field, to withstand the most pressing Entreaties of his Mistress : and immediately another Scene follows, in which there is not Difference enough to keep up our Attention ; and *Sabine* and *Camille* at once intreating the same Thing of the two Heroes, rather again makes a Confusion than a Contrast ; for the Difference of the Behaviour of the two Heroes is not strong nor characteristic enough to be remember'd.

The third Act of the *Roman Father*, opens with *Valerius* and *Valeria* ; she strongly paints to her Brother the Distress of *Horatia*, and perswades him to suppress the selfish Lover, and be the generous Friend, *Horatia* at  
pre-

present so much wanted, to bear her Supplications to *Curatius* to quit the Field. The young Lover starts at the Proposal, but at last is wrought on to undertake the arduous Task. And here to shew our Author's Judgment, even in the minutest Circumstances, he makes this Undertaking of *Valerius* natural, by his saying,

*It never can succeed—To attempt it makes her  
My Friend—That Hope determines all.*

In the next Scene, the Impatience *Horatia's* Situation throws her into at every Moment's Delay of the coming of *Valerius*, is finely expressed; and when in that Impatience, her Thoughts dwelling on her own Brother's having rejected her Prayers and Tears, she says to *Valeria*, "Are all Brothers so?" I cannot help thinking of that beautiful Stroke in *King Lear*,

*What, have his Daughters brought him to this?*

When *Valerius* enters, *Horatia* gives him a Scarf of her own Work, to bear to *Curatius*; every Word she says on this delightful Incident, is tender enough to melt our Hearts, and the natural Result of her present Circumstances. Now 'tis not out of the Character of *Valerius* to be influenced heartily to undertake her Message to *Curatius*, when he sees the Height of her Distress; though it would not have been



been in Character to have done it on the Persuasions of his Sister.

*Horatia's* whole Behaviour in sending away *Valerius*, calling him back, wishing him to be already with *Curiaius*, yet still thinking she had more to say, with her Anxiety after *Valerius* is gone, is all naturally and beautifully painted. Her Mistake upon the Servant's entering and saying, *Your Father*.—as thinking that Man could bring her News from *Curiaius*, is a charming Mistake, and nothing could have more strongly painted the great Anxiety of her Mind. The old Man's entering, led in by his Servants, as quite exhausted in Strength with the excessive Flow of Spirits, occasioned by such an important Day, is very finely imagined. It keeps up the Character of the *Roman* Patriot, that he would not leave the View of the Battle, where his Boys were *Rome's* Champions, till his Loss of Strength, disables him from being any longer a Spectator of the glorious Combat; and also is an exceeding fine Incident (without any Encroachment on Probability) to bring him on the Stage to hear the News of his Son's Flight, which produces that noble Scene in the End of this Act.

The Servant's bringing *Horatia* a Letter from her Lover, in Answer to her Request sent by *Valerius*, I cannot say gave me any great Pleasure; and I should have wished it had been

I

omitted,

omitted, had it not been for the Opportunity it gives old *Horatius* to speak this most beautiful Speech.

*Horatius.*

—Could he with Honour have declin'd the Fight,  
I should myself have join'd in thy Request,  
And forc'd him from the Field. But think, my  
Child,  
Had he consented, and had Alba's Cause,  
Supported by another Arm, been baffled,  
What then could'st thou expect? Would he not curse  
His foolish Love and hate thee for thy Fondness?  
Nay think, perhaps, 'twas Artifice in thee  
To aggrandize thy Race, and lift their Fame  
Triumphant o'er his Ruin and his Country's.  
Think well on that, and Reason must convince  
thee.

And to *Horatia* thus to answer it.

*Horatia.*

Alas, had Reason ever yet the Power  
To talk down Grief, or bid the tortured Wretch  
Not feel his Anguish? 'tis impossible!  
Could Reason govern, I should now rejoice  
They were engag'd, and count the tedious  
Moments  
'Till Conquest smil'd, and Rome again was  
free.  
Could Reason govern, I should beg of Heav'n  
To

*To guide my Brother's Sword, and plunge it  
deep*

*Ev'n in the Bosom of the Man I love.*

*I should forget he ever won my Soul;*

*Forget 'twas your Command that bade me  
love him;*

*Nay fly perhaps to yon detested Field,*

*And spurn with Scorn his mangled Carcase  
from me.*

And whatever Incidents are productive of such Beauties, if they are are Faults, I do not wish them mended.

There is a peculiar Beauty in this Speech of *Horatia's*, which I desire you to observe; namely, that whilst she is under the Influence of Passion, and consequently thinks Reason is against her, she imagines the Commands of Reason to be what they are not; and whilst a sudden Anger, raised in her Mind by her Lover's denying her Request, suggests that wild Thought, of spurning with Scorn his mangled Carcase from her, she throws the Blame on Reason, and will not accuse her Passions of the Fault; this is a small, an almost unperceived Piece of Cunning in the human Mind, which our ingenious Author has finely discover'd in one Speech, properly calculated to express the Passions of his Heroine.

In that noble Scene in the End of the third Act, you say the *English* Poet has closely fol-

low'd the *French*, and you allow has equal'd, if not excell'd him: Mr. *Whitehead* himself says, in his Advertisement to the Reader, that both in this Scene, and part of the next Act, he has traced *Corneille* very closely. This was modestly said, for I cannot help thinking, that whoever impartially reads and compares the two Scenes together, must confess that instead of following, he has far exceeded the *French* Author.

I confess, I think, to have copy'd this Scene, and not have done Injustice to the noble Original, would have been no small Praise; but, as Mr. *Whitehead* has, in my Opinion, much excell'd it, would it not be doing him Injustice to let the Name of *Corneille* blind us so far, as to prevent our giving the Preference where it is so justly due?

To shew with any Exactness that this Preference is due to the *English* Author, it would be necessary to examine the two Scenes Line by Line, and place them in Opposition to each other; but, as you have both the Plays in your Hand, I will leave the making this nice Comparison to your own Judgment, and then I leave the Decision to your Candour. I know the *English* Play affects my Passions most; and I think Mr. *Whitehead*, by having introduced that Scene between the King and *Publius* in the second Act, and by the old Man's Sickness, has given himself an Opportunity of adding two or three very great Beauties to this



this so justly admired Scene ; particularly in the following most affecting Speech.

Horatius.

[Endeavouring to rise.

*What means this Weakness ? 'tis untimely now,  
When I should punish an ungrateful Boy.*

*Was this his boasted Virtue which could charm  
His cheated Sovereign, and brought Tears of*

*Joy*

*To my old Eyes ?—so young a Hypocrite !*

*O Shame, Shame, Shame !*

And as Mr. *Whitehead* has added some great Beauties, so also has he cured some Faults in this Scene of *Corneille* ; which, as much as upon the whole I have admir'd it, I have always wish'd could be mended. In the first Place it is not in Character for a *Roman* Senator, in the Situation of old *Horatius* in this Scene, whilst he is in Agonies for his Family's Disgrace, and *Rome* inflav'd by the imagined Flight of his Son, to mention what Prince *Rome* should obey. And in the next Place, 'tis not in Character for even *Corneille's* old *Horace* (altho' seeking Vengeance on his Son) to vent his Rage on *Sabine*, by telling her she did not feel the Sorrows of his Family, because her own Husband and Brothers were alive.

I grant the Truth of your Observation, concerning the many good Sentiments in the first three Scenes of this third Act of *Corneille's*

*Horace* ;

*Horace* ; but then they are a Sort of Repetition of Hopes and Fears from the same Persons, almost in the same Situation as they have before appear'd in : Whereas in the *English* Play the Scenes are all new ; some little Incident, judiciously managed, varies every Scene ; each Character has an Opportunity to exert itself ; and that Incident of the Scarf\* need only be mention'd to bring to our Remembrance the great Propriety and Beauty of it : and as it is spoken of in *Livy*, I cannot help wondering how the ingenious *French* Writer came to leave it out.

In the Beginning of the fourth Act, you say again with Mr. *Whitehead*, that he has closely traced *Corneille* ; but here again I must beg leave to say, I think he has excelled him, both by curing the Oversights that appear to me in *Corneille*, and by some great additional Beauties of his own. In the *French* Play, 'tis a great Impropriety that *Camille* should be present when the Combat was related, and that she should stay and make that long Soliloquy you admire (and which I also should admire, if it was spoke by a Woman in a different Situation) For can it be imagined that it was possible for *Camille* to hear the News of her Lover's Death with no more Emotion, than only crying out—*Alas !*—that she could stay with her Father and *Valerius* whilst

\* The Paludamentum mention'd in *Livy*, means properly a Military Robe : But calling it a Scarf, is, I think, a very allowable Alteration.

whilst the whole Story was related, and then make a long Speech on the Uncertainty of human Events? and is it possible, whilst this is her Manner of receiving the News of the Death of *Curia*, that we can feel the least Compassion for her? Do we not follow her Example, and are not our Passions as cool as hers? But in the Discovery made by *Valerius* to old *Horatius* of his Son's Conquest, and the old Man's Behaviour on it, we must again examine the *French* and *English* very exactly, if we will do Justice to the *English* Author: for to me it strongly appears, that in the *English* every Beauty of *Corneille's* is preserved, and generally heighten'd, every superfluous Word is lop'd off, and many additional Beauties added. When in the *English* Play, *Valerius* begins to declare the Purport of his Business, those few Words of the old Man's, "I've heard it all," are so very judicious, that many Beauties in this grand Scene depend on them. First, they throw *Valerius* into as great a Mistake as the old Man himself lay under; for by this Means, he must naturally think that *Horatius* knew of the Conquest of his Son: whereas in the *French*, we rather wonder that *Valerius* does not sooner find out the old Man's Mistake. And I do assure you sincerely, that this Beauty enlarges in my Mind, even whilst I am speaking of it: For what could be more finely imagin'd, than that the old Man by his Impetuosity should

should deceive *Valerius*, and by that Deception be naturally kept long enough in his own Mistake, to give him an Opportunity to exert all his Impetuosity, all his Thirst for Vengeance, and then suddenly be turn'd to Joy and Rapture, by catching the broken Words of *Valerius*, who by that single Question,

*Did you not say you knew?*

shews us the Reason he had so long kept the old Man in Suspence. When the Discovery begins to open, read the long Speeches in *Corneille*, (fine tho' they are) and compare them with Mr. *Whithead's* artful Manner of working the Passions of old *Horatius*, and then decide which deserves the Preference in this justly applauded Scene, the *French* or the *English* Poet.

Nor can I omit pointing out to you the Beauty of that natural Turn of the old Man's Mind, where in a Rapture he crys out,

*Did I not say, Valeria, that my Boy  
Must needs be dead, or Rome victorious?*

In the next Scene, whilst the *French Camille*, having heard the Relation of the Death of *Curiace*, is speaking her long Soliloquy, the *English Horatia* enters, having been just inform'd of her Lover's Death. And here, I think, is one of the finest Pictures of a Mind suddenly



suddenly turn'd from anxious Suspence to fix'd  
Despair, that I ever remember to have seen.

*Sir, when I saw you last I was a Woman,  
The Fool of Nature.*

And *Valeria* in her Answer, I believe speaks  
the Mind of the whole Audience :

*My dear Horatia, you strike Terrors thro' me.*

The use that is here made of the Incident of the Scarf, is one of the strongest Proofs of the judicious Conduct of this Play, where every little Incident is heighten'd, into a most striking Beauty. We had before seen *Horatia* deliver this Scarf to *Valerius*, when being shaken with alternate Hopes and Fears, her Behaviour is properly adapted to the anxious Suspence which then struggled in her Mind ; we now see her when all Hope is lost, and consequently when all Fear is at an end : She hears that this very Scarf (her Pledge of Love to *Curatius*) adorns her conquering Brother, with no other Emotion but Joy ; as this Spectacle would strengthen the Resolution her Despair had already form'd. In this Scene, I am sure the Characters are very strictly preserved : *Valeria* is a Friend ; in *Valerius* breaks forth the Lover, with some small Gleams of Hope ; and in the strong and natural Turns of *Horatia's* Mind, we have that Preparation

for her Death which *Corneille* wanted; and I will leave you to the Consideration of her own expressive Words, to do justice to the Poet.

The next Scene, which begins with old *Horatius* and *Publius* passing thro' a Crowd of the *Roman* Citizens, with the Chorus, is well contrived for Action, as it shews us the Raptures of the old Man in his Son's Glory. The Sorrow of old *Horatius*, that he had suspected his Son, is very noble; as nothing hurts a generous Mind so much, as having been guilty of a false Suspicion. And now *Horatia* enters to pursue her Purpose of enraging her Brother, to join her by Death to her *Curatius*; here we are prepared for *Horatia*'s cursing *Rome*. In *Corneille*, those Curses break from his *Camille*, without any Preparation at all.

You think with *Corneille*, that it is impossible to bring on the Death of his *Camille* with any Propriety, unless he makes his Hero brutal; nor does he seem to think it possible, to throw any Humanity into the Character of young *Horace*, whilst the Story demands he should be guilty of that Action of killing his Sister. I should agree with him in Opinion, did I not consider this Story as a *Roman* Story, and the Hero of it as a *Roman*, whose Religion was the Love of his Country. Amongst the *Romans*, Love of their Country was so much their Religion, that a *Roman* did not deserve the Name of Hero amongst his Countrymen, till he

he had work'd himself up to the highest Pitch of Enthusiasm in that Religion.

You ask me, why neither *Corneille*, or Mr. *Whitehead*, has made *Horatius* kill his Sister on the Stage; *Corneille's* Reasons you may see in his own Examen of this Piece. But it appears to me, that in the *English* Play, this Conduct is design'd to take off from the Audience the Notion of its being a brutal Act of sudden Passion. You make it a Question, whether the Act's not being done in the midst of *Horatia's* Curses on the Stage, does not add to the Cruelty, and make it a premeditated Act of Inhumanity? I think not, for the more apparent the Enthusiasm of *Publius*, in the Religion of the *Romans*, is made, the less of Cruelty appears in the Action; and nothing in my Opinion could make it an act of brutal Inhumanity, so much as the Supposition, that being stop'd in his own Triumph enraged him to such a degree, as to render him capable of murdering his Sister. In all Stories which have their Foundation in known Facts, we must consider the Religion and Manners of the People, where such Matters of Fact were transacted, or we cannot be competent Judges of their Characters. Whilst the Guards were forcing *Horatia* from the Stage, the old Man interposing, with saying

———O my Son——  
Spare, spare a Father,  
K 2

*Publius*

*Publius* could not force his way through his Father, to murder his Sister ; but when *Publius* has made the following Speech,

*Publius.*

*Let her avoid me then—My whole Soul's moved,  
And Rome's immortal Genius stirs within me !  
Yes, ye dread Powers, &c.*

And then leaves the Stage ; his whole Soul is fill'd with the highest Enthusiasm of his Religion ; and he again meets his Sister prophaning and heaping Curses on his Country : This was surely such an Aggravation of her Crime, that her Death not only naturally followed, but it was impossible it should not follow.

You in a manner give up the fifth Act of *Cornelle's Horace*, as a cool piece of Pleading, which, tho' ever so full of fine Sentiments, must in this Place tire the Audience ; and for the same Reason, doth *Cornelle* himself give it up, as I before mention'd, in his own Examen, which, I find you have not lately read, or you would certainly have taken Notice of it, not only in this Place, but in several others, where you find the same Faults with your Author, as he does with himself.

*Valeria*, in the fifth Act, in her Description of the fatal Blow given to *Horatia* by *Publius*, tells us he weeps, even in the Moment he lifted up his Sword. This plainly points out to us, that *Publius* was, in his own Opinion, rather



rather doing an act of religious Justice, than of sudden Passion ; and was now inspired with the same ardent Love of his Country, as when before he made all private Ties of Blood and Friendship yield to his *Roman* Patriotism, by opposing his best Friends in the Field of Battle.

If the *English* Author has succeeded in the Design, which I think very apparent throughout his Play, namely, to give his Hero Humanity enough to engage our Pity for him, then till he is safe from the Rage of the *Roman* Citizens, stirr'd up by *Valerius*, we cannot say the Play is at an End ; whereas in *Corneille*, the Play has been generally said to end at the fourth Act. In the *English* Play, the old Man's Heart being divided between Joy for the Glory of his Son, and Grief arising from Affection for his Daughter, gives him a fresh Opportunity, at once to exert the *Roman* Patriot, and the tender Father ; whilst the Humanity of *Publius*, and the Tenderness he expresses to his Sister, join'd to her earnest Sollicitations for her Brother's Safety, even whilst she is dying by his Hand, at one View sets before us a Generosity in the Minds of these three principal Characters in the Play, which raise our Admiration, and affect our Minds with Pity. And even in the pleading itself, we cannot say we are disinterested, whilst the Safety of *Publius Horatius* is doubtful. For young *Horace* in *Corneille*, indeed we cannot

cannot be interested, as his Brutality gives him no Claim to our Compassion.

Is it natural for the King, in the *French* Play, to endeavour to influence the *Roman* Citizens in Favour of young *Horace*; by saying, that “this Crime, altho’ great, enormous, and inexcusable, comes from the same Sword, and from the same Arm, that had that Day made him Master of two Kingdoms, and given him two Scepters?” Is it not much more natural, and more likely to influence the *Roman* People, to say as the King does in the *English* Play, when he would save *Publius*,

———*He loved the Maid*

*With a fond Brother’s Love; and had he felt  
No nobler Passion, she had still survived.*

Which nobler Passion was the Love of their Freedom, and their Glory. And when the only Plea for *Publius* was his religious Love of his Country, was it not finely contrived, to turn the Minds of the *Roman* Citizens in his Favour, by a Discovery, that *Valerius* was urged on by a private Passion, and a Desire of Revenge, to accuse this Hero? But altho’ I have received great Pleasure, both from seeing and reading the *Roman Father*, yet I would not willingly, from the Remembrance of that Pleasure, be so influenced in its Favour, as to lose that Candour of Mind which

I would always wish to preserve. And altho' I think the Faults of *Corneille's* last Act are cured, as well as the Story will admit, in the *English* Play, yet I am inclined to believe, that the Story will not admit equal Beauties in the last Act with the four first. And, after all I have said of this Play, I think the Story is not very properly adapted to move our Hearts; and I confess I was surprized to find, that the Author of the *Roman Father* had, even from this Story, contrived, by his lively Images of Distress, to draw Tears of Pity from my Eyes; and I make no Doubt, but that with a Story more calculated for that Purpose, he is capable of melting his Audience into Tears, and forcing the most harden'd Hearts to sympathize with his favourite Characters.

I have not here attempted to say any thing that may have the least Appearance of regular Criticism. I know my own Incapacity of executing such an Attempt. You desired, when I had read the *English* Play, I would give you my Thoughts freely concerning it; your Desire made me read the *French* and *English* Plays, with a stronger View of observing to which the Preference was most justly and impartially due, than I should perhaps otherwise have done. By this Means I am the more convinced of the Advantage the *English Roman Father* has over the *French Horace*. My Design was to do Justice (as far as my Judgment was capable of doing it) to the Merit  
of

of each Play. I have not endeavoured to spy Faults in *Corneille*, nor have I been over-curious in observing little Oversights. I would not deny the Merit of *Corneille*, nor have I ever contradicted your Observations on the Beauty of his Sentiments, whilst you will confine yourself to speak of them as Sentiments only. But I confess, when I read *Corneille's Horace*, I am chiefly inclin'd to cool Reflection; when I read Mr. *Whithead's Roman Father*, my Passions are affected, and my Heart is warm'd, as you may see by the Difficulty I have to quit the Subject,

I am, S I R,



Your very Humble Servant,

J. BROMLEY.



